

# U.S. Said to Agree Bombs Hit Mission

By **BERNARD GWERTZMAN**  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15—The Nixon Administration has concluded in private that off-target American bombs, and not a North Vietnamese antiaircraft missile, were probably responsible for the damage done to the French and other diplomatic missions in Hanoi last week, a high ranking official said today.

And Secretary of State William P. Rogers, in a television interview, left the clear impression that he did not care to argue with reports of witnesses that a United States Navy F-4 fighter-bomber had dropped the bombs, although he said a "final determination" had not been reached.

"It is regrettable that it happened," "We have expressed our regrets to those countries whose embassies were involved, but faulty bomb drops do occur upon occasion," Mr. Rogers said.

Mr. Rogers said "I think there will be some statement by the Defense Department on this." But Daniel Z. Henkin, the Pentagon spokesman, said no statement was contemplated today because investigation of the incident had not been completed.

## Railyards the Target

After initial reports of the damage last Wednesday, the Defense Department issued a statement asserting that United States Navy F-4 Phantom jets had struck railyards and transshipment points across the Red River from the French mission, three miles away. It said that damage to the French and other missions could have been caused by a faulty North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile that blew up when it fell to earth.

But Secretary of Defense

Melyin R. Laird, in a news conference, conceded the same day that pilot error might have been responsible.

Various witnesses have asserted that they saw an American plane drop bombs in the diplomatic quarter of Hanoi. The North Vietnamese have also said they had recovered bomb fragments from the debris.

Damage was also reported by the Algerian and Indian embassies in Hanoi, both near the French mission.

## 'Concensus' Cited

An Administration official was asked whether Mr. Rogers felt that American bombs had been responsible. The official said that there was a "concensus" in the Administration that they had been. The State Department, in particular, has felt there was no point in continuing to claim that an errant rocket was responsible when evidence seemed to point to the bombs.

But Mr. Rogers stressed that despite the incident, there would be no change in American policy of bombing "military targets" in North Vietnam.

"We would certainly hope there would be no further accidents," he said. "The President has said consistently that we would continue the bombing of military targets in the North. There is going to be no change in policy."

He said that the United States would try to "avoid accidents" and would "do everything we can to avoid or minimize any civilian damage."

Appearing on "Issues and Answers" over the American Broadcasting Company, Mr. Rogers refused to provide any details on the negotiations with North Vietnam on ending the war.

Asked about Henry A. Kissinger's most recent round of private talks in Paris last week, Mr. Rogers said he did not want to comment in any way because the negotiations "are now in a very serious and very sensitive stage."

Other sources had said that the talks last week were the most substantive and least polemical of any held in the series dating from August 1969. But many differences remain, they said.

## McGovern Plan Criticized

Mr. Rogers attacked Senator George McGovern's recent peace plan for Vietnam, saying it amounted to "an offer to surrender."

He also said that he had not made up his mind yet about whether he cared to continue in office if President Nixon were re-elected.

Paul C. Warnke, a national security adviser to Senator McGovern, said on the National Broadcasting Company program "Meet th Press" that he thought "the chances are very dim of securing a political settlement before the election or within any reasonable time thereafter" in Vietnam.

He said that he was pessimistic because "as I understand it, our position still requires the maintenance and power of the Thieu regime and the maintenance of the status quo is inconsistent with a political compromise and a political compromise in my view is the only way that the war can be ended."

# We Admit US Bomb At Hanoi

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The United States today admitted responsibility for the bombing of the French mission in Hanoi, saying it "was inadvertent."

The Pentagon blamed "failure of the ordnance to release properly."

This was the first formal admission of the Oct. 11 incident, which killed six persons, including the mission chief, Delegate General Pierre Susini, who died of burns in Paris last night, and five Indochinese employees.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State William Rogers cabled French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann "profound regrets and personal condolences" over the death of Susini.

State Department spokesman Charles Bray said he had no information on whether the United States would be offering to pay compensation.

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird tried to suggest last week that the French build-

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ing could have been damaged by a North Vietnamese antiaircraft missile falling back to earth.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry Friedheim told newsmen investigators have not been able to identify the plane which dropped the bomb and that "there is no intention here to engage in reprimands or recriminations."

Friedheim said no changes are being made in the rules under which American bombers operate. And he indicated strongly that the episode will not deter American attacks on military targets.

The Pentagon's formal statement read by Friedheim said:

"All information now available to us from a variety of sources indicates that the French Mission in Hanoi was inadvertently struck by a U.S. bomb.

"When the accident occurred, U.S. aircraft were attacking authorized military targets, including a railroad yard and transshipment point across the Red

River approximately three miles from the French property.

"One possible cause of the accident is the failure of the ordnance to release properly. We have not been able to identify any specific U.S. aircraft that was involved in this regrettable accident.

"It continues to be our policy to target only military facilities.

"The U.S. government has expressed its regrets to the government of France."

Ahead of the official statement, sources in Saigon indicated that interviews with Navy pilots who flew from the carrier Midway pointed to a "hung bomb" as the probable cause. A "hung bomb" is one that fails to drop as it is supposed to; instead, after a jet pulls up and away, it slips out on a wild course.

Friedheim said judgments were reached by the U.S. government after analysis of post-strike photography and reconstruction of the incident from pilot accounts and what he termed "a few other sources." He did not identify the latter.